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### Ambassador to Norway, Historian of Bethel: The Career of Margaret Joy Tibbetts

Andy DeRoche  
*University of Colorado*

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# AMBASSADOR TO NORWAY, HISTORIAN OF BETHEL: THE CAREER OF MARGARET JOY TIBBETTS

BY ANDY DEROCHE

*Margaret Tibbetts grew up in Bethel, graduated from Gould Academy, and later earned a Ph.D. from Bryn Mawr. As a career Foreign Service officer, she served in Europe and Africa in a variety of positions until being named U.S. ambassador to Norway in 1964. Her work as one of the first female ambassadors set the stage for future women to play even bigger roles in U.S. foreign relations. The author grew up in Hanover, Maine, and attended Rumford High School. Majoring in history, he earned a B.A. from Princeton University, an M.A. from the University of Maine, and a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado. His major publications include a study of U.S.-Zimbabwe relations and a biography of Andrew Young. He teaches history at Front Range Community College and international affairs at the University of Colorado. He lives in Longmont, Colorado, with his wife Heather. They have two children and have adopted their niece.*

SINCE THE early 1990s, historians have paid more attention to the important role of women and the significance of gender in American diplomacy, successfully creating a vibrant sub-field within the study of U.S. foreign relations. A 2012 roundtable in *Diplomatic History*, the leading journal in the field, illuminated the progress that has been made over the past two decades. In her introduction to the roundtable, scholar Katherine Sibley noted that focusing on women or gender was no longer as controversial as it had been twenty years before. She applauded the fact that the roundtable included several biographical entries.<sup>1</sup> In her concluding comments, historian Laura McEnaney contended that the articles in the roundtable demonstrated that historians have moved beyond debating the question of whether gender was relevant to the study of U.S. foreign relations. As a result, scholars can now

get down to the business of assessing the significance of women in American diplomacy.<sup>2</sup>

More work still needs to be done to incorporate women and gender into the study of U.S. foreign relations, and this essay on the life of a female diplomat adds to this growing body of work. Maine native Margaret Tibbetts served as a distinguished diplomat for over twenty years, eventually becoming ambassador to Norway in 1964. At that time she was only the eighth woman to be in charge of a U.S. embassy. Upon returning to Washington in 1969 she worked briefly as deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs before retiring in 1971 to Bethel, where she lived for nearly forty years until her death in 2010. In spite of her significant role in U.S. foreign relations and the history of Maine, she has received very little attention from scholars.<sup>3</sup> As a path-breaking female ambassador who opened doors for future American women, one of the most successful Maine natives to serve the nation in the twentieth century, and a key contributor to the study and preservation of local history in Bethel, the career of Margaret Tibbetts deserves closer examination. Tibbetts relied on her intelligence and skill to help craft U.S. foreign relations during the Cold War. As one of the very first female Foreign Service officers, Tibbetts opened the door for future well-educated women to play key roles in American diplomacy.

### **Background and Education**

Margaret Joy Tibbetts was born on August 26, 1919, in Bethel, the third child of Dr. Raymond Tibbetts and Pearl Ashby Tibbetts. Her father's family, Puritan yeoman farmers from England, had migrated to Maine in the 1640s. Raymond Tibbetts, born in 1875, graduated from Bowdoin College and medical school. He served the village of Bethel and the surrounding area as a family doctor for decades.<sup>4</sup> When Margaret was a girl in the 1920s and early 1930s, he only charged one or two dollars for visits in town. House calls to more distant farms cost five dollars. If he went out at night, his wife, a nurse, often accompanied him and left the three children at home. While they never enjoyed great wealth, Margaret and her siblings grew up in a nurturing home, and she was proud to be the daughter of a well-respected doctor and nurse.<sup>5</sup>

The Ashby family, her mother's clan, had not been in Maine as long, but had been among the pioneer settlers in Aroostook County. Although her mother, who was born in 1885, did not have a high level of formal education, she had a sharp mind and was very creative. She published a

novel in the 1930s called *Land under Heaven*, which was based on the story of her family in Aroostook County. Margaret spent a lot of time with her mom during her childhood, and greatly enjoyed going on outings with her. They swam in Songo Pond, walked in the woods of Oxford County, and hiked in the nearby White Mountains.<sup>6</sup> As Margaret later recalled, her mother had a special ability to make anything she and the children were doing seem fun, and to “make life an adventure.”<sup>7</sup>

Her youth as a tomboy prepared Margaret for a very busy four years at Bethel’s Gould Academy, where she participated in several sports including basketball and volleyball. She also served as editor of the school newspaper and was active in theatre. A very good all-around student, she was a member of the debating team and was the valedictorian of the class of 1937. The yearbook presciently described her as “modern, jovial, and trustworthy,” all suitable characteristics for a future diplomat.<sup>8</sup> Francis Crane, the wife of Gould’s assistant headmaster, suggested to Doctor Tibbetts that Margaret attend Wheaton, a small women’s college in Massachusetts that was her alma mater. It turned out to be a perfect choice, not too close to home in Bethel but also not too far away.

Margaret was very active during her years at Wheaton College. She played basketball, took part in student government, and worked as a waitress and an usher in church to help pay her tuition. She majored in history and studied diligently. She was chosen for Phi Beta Kappa as a junior and then graduated summa cum laude in 1941. One of her Wheaton professors encouraged her to apply to the Ph.D. program at Bryn Mawr College. She was accepted by Bryn Mawr, Columbia, and Radcliffe. Bryn Mawr offered the best funding, so she was off to Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup> Focusing on British political history, Tibbetts sailed through graduate school and in 1944 she left Bryn Mawr with both a master’s degree and a doctorate in hand.

### First Government Jobs

A University of Pennsylvania historian who was working for the Organization of Strategic Services (OSS) had close connections with the history faculty at Bryn Mawr, and he heard positive things about Tibbetts. The OSS gathered and processed intelligence for the U.S. government during World War II, and was essentially the predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency. The OSS recruited her to work in its research and development section, where she specialized in English history and politics. She had also considered being a college professor, but,

partly because her older brother had died in the service, she felt strongly that she should contribute to the war effort. After a two-week vacation in Bethel, Margaret journeyed to Washington to begin her career as a government official. She passed the civil service exam with flying colors, officially joining the OSS with a rank of P-1 (professional junior grade). Because of her Ph.D. she was quickly promoted to P-2.

Tibbetts enjoyed her time working for the OSS, scurrying around the place as a junior assistant and coming into contact with a large group of brilliant scholars and officials. She had coffee every morning with a well-respected philosopher named Norman Brown. She wrote a paper for Walt Rostow, who became the national security advisor in the 1960s. She did some research for Ralph Bunche, the first African American to win the Nobel Peace prize. Working for the OSS during World War II was like going through a second graduate program; it helped sharpen her analytical abilities and prepared her for a career in diplomacy. As the war wound down, Tibbetts was still considering a career in academia and was offered a job at Smith College in Massachusetts. Instead, she opted to accept a position with the State Department and remain in Washington.<sup>10</sup>

For the next few years, Tibbetts worked in the Office of British Commonwealth Affairs. One of her most noteworthy assignments was to attend the 1948 meeting of the United Nation's General Assembly in Paris. She spent most of this period working in Washington at the Canadian Desk, though, where she was busy briefing and debriefing employees for the fourteen U.S. consulates in Canada. The demanding workload meant that she was given considerable freedom to demonstrate her abilities, which her colleagues appreciated. "I got along well with them and was quick to learn," she noted. She also benefitted from once again being surrounded by good teachers: "I landed with people who trained me very thoroughly."<sup>11</sup> In 1949 she was the first domestic State Department employee chosen for a new exchange program with the Foreign Service, and her initial overseas posting was in the political affairs section at the U.S. embassy in London.

### **Working in London**

Tibbetts' responsibilities included reporting on Britain's policies towards its African colonies, so she "wrangled an invitation" to a conference for U.S. diplomats working in Africa, held in Mozambique in 1950. Getting there on a British Overseas Airways Corporation plane was a

"slow process," flying through the days and then spending the nights along the way in Sicily, Egypt (where she visited the pyramids), Uganda, and Southern Rhodesia. Tibbetts enjoyed the opportunity to see Victoria Falls, as well as the local flora and fauna.<sup>12</sup>

What made more of an impression on Tibbetts than the natural beauty of the region, however, was the racism of her companions, most of whom were Englishmen living in Southern Rhodesia. As the plane carried them farther south, they had become more outspoken in their views regarding black Africans and how the colonies should be managed. They were "candid" about their support for "a very firmly racist policy." According to Tibbetts, these settlers were the "most reactionary British or English people on the face of the earth." During her stay in the luxurious Victoria Falls Hotel, Tibbetts was amazed at how her white counterparts shared their frank opinions regarding Africans right in front of the staff, as if these workers were not even there. She was similarly shocked by the African men standing in the women's bathroom with soap and towels. According to the racial attitudes among whites in Southern Rhodesia, this was perfectly acceptable because these men did not really "exist" as adult human beings; Tibbetts was uncomfortable because "they did exist of course."<sup>13</sup>

Her observations of the prevalent racism in Southern Rhodesia may well have allowed her to empathize more easily with the African representatives who came to London in the spring of 1952 to present their case against the proposed Rhodesian Federation, which would combine the three colonies of Nyasaland (later Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia), and Southern Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) into one. At a meeting with sympathetic members of Parliament, seventeen men expressed their concern that federation would mean the expansion of not only Southern Rhodesian racism into the other two territories, but also the spread of even more racist South African influence. The leader of the group was Harry Nkumbula, who Tibbetts characterized as a good speaker but also as "an angry and bitter man." She contended that his argument was not entirely logical, but his commitment to the cause was commendable. Nkumbula and his associates were "determined men," and their opposition was significant.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, Tibbetts observed that Nkumbula's group had very few allies in London. The left wing of the Labour Party did express opposition to federation. However, most members of Parliament, like the general public in Britain, cared very little about what was happening in southern Africa. Attention to the Rhodesian situation may even have de-

clined later in 1952. In November, Tibbetts commented that “public interest in the question of Federation has yielded somewhat to the more dramatic issue of the Mau Maus in Kenya.”<sup>15</sup> The Mau Mau uprising would last until 1960 and its brutal suppression by the British military would claim the lives of well over 10,000 people.<sup>16</sup> As Tibbetts predicted, people in Britain were in fact very concerned about the Mau Maus, which surely reduced the attention paid to the debate over creating a Rhodesian Federation. Early in 1953 she concluded that “there would appear to be no political obstacle in the United Kingdom for putting Federation through.”<sup>17</sup> With little opposition in Parliament, the Colonial Office strongly supported federation, focusing primarily on economic benefits. Britain was broke after World War II, and consolidating control of the three territories was seen as a way to foster big profits from the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia.<sup>18</sup> This view won the day.

In mid-1953, Tibbetts reported that “the final steps in the creation of the Federation of Central Africa” were being taken in Parliament. She contended that the Colonial Office knew what it was getting into. She characterized the British diplomats as realistic individuals who truly believed that this step was in the best interests of the United Kingdom. She also assured her superiors that Colonial Office officials were not racists or supporters of apartheid, and that they saw real opportunities for black Africans in the proposed federation government. She strongly believed that the United States should support this policy. “Admittedly Federation is a gamble and there are many rocks in the road ahead,” she opined, but “the responsible leaders and officials of the British Government would not have been convinced of its necessity if they had not seen in Federation the possibility of creating in Central Africa a stable society which would ultimately strengthen Britain’s position.”<sup>19</sup> The U.S. government, partly motivated by Cold War anti-communism, accepted Tibbetts’ advice and seconded Britain’s policies towards the Rhodesian Federation throughout its ten-year existence.<sup>20</sup>

Tibbetts served as a diplomat during the Cold War. This ideological struggle between the leader of the world’s capitalist democracies, the United States, and the leader of the communist world, the Soviet Union, was the determining factor in U.S. foreign policy during Tibbetts’ nearly twenty years of service. Starting with the announcement of the Truman Doctrine (aid to Turkey and Greece) in March 1947, the bottom line of most U.S. foreign policy for the next forty-five years was to contain communism. Examples of foreign interventions abound during this period, including wars in Korea and Vietnam, as well as smaller-scale interven-



In late 1954, Margaret Tibbetts began her second overseas posting, in the Belgian colony of the Congo. Her responsibility was to monitor economic developments in the region. Courtesy of the Bethel Historical Society.

tions in Angola, Cuba, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Iran, just to name a few. In the 1960s the newly independent Congo would also be a top priority for policymakers and attract several interventions and lots of money.

### **Stint in the Congo**

Her second overseas posting, which began in late 1954, was in the Belgian colony of the Congo, in the heart of Africa. Central Africa was extremely important to the United States in the 1950s as a source of metals such as uranium, copper, cobalt, and chromium.<sup>21</sup> There was not a great variety of American business activity in the Congo in the 1950s, but the United States did have a crucial interest in the mining sector there, as well as in neighboring Northern Rhodesia. The metals produced in Central Africa were in high demand in the United States. Copper was needed for bullets used in the war in Korea. Additionally, President Dwight Eisenhower decided to create a stockpile of strategic metals. As a result, the United States invested quite heavily in the Congo and the Rhodesian Federation in the 1950s.<sup>22</sup>

Tibbetts' assignment at the U.S. consulate was to monitor economic



developments in the region, but the consul general spent a lot of time away from the post, which left her in control and gave her valuable management experience. During one of his absences, a document was submitted by some Congolese workers calling for better treatment, and Tibbetts opted to forward it to the State Department.<sup>23</sup> She expressed concern that the Belgians were creating a “Frankenstein’s monster” in the Congo with their labor policies, and that there could very well be difficult days ahead in the Congo.<sup>24</sup> Her warnings proved to be quite accurate, unfortunately.<sup>25</sup>

Officials from the State Department inspected the consulate and were impressed that Tibbetts had been in charge for about half of the time that year. She also displayed remarkable ingenuity while in the Congo. When her boss questioned how she would be able to report on economic issues, since, as a woman, she was not allowed into the all-male business clubs such as the Rotary, she informed him that she would simply visit the businessmen individually in their offices. Her determination resulted in a thorough study of what Americans needed to do in order to conduct business in the Congo, which greatly pleased the Commerce Department back in Washington. She also utilized her academic background to make several friends at the local university, which similarly paid dividends in terms of helpful information for her reports.<sup>26</sup>

About halfway through her two-year stint in Leopoldville, Tibbetts was pleasantly surprised by the visit of Congresswoman Frances Bolton (R-OH), who, as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s subcommittee on Africa, believed it was her duty to learn about that complex continent. Bolton, as one of only seventeen women among the 435 members of the House, was quite a trailblazer herself, and she also coincidentally was a personal acquaintance of Margaret. Bolton had visited Bethel frequently with her brother William Bingham, the wealthy benefactor of Gould Academy, and on one of her visits she had met the Tibbetts family. She took time out from her busy itinerary to compose a letter to Dr. Raymond Tibbetts. “Imagine my surprise when I found your daughter here,” Bolton wrote. “All the many Bethel memories swept over me once again – Gould – and your many years of consecrated service,” the congresswoman continued. About Margaret she observed that “she is doing a fine job, that daughter of yours. She looks and acts well. Tennis and golf with a sound philosophy have served a useful purpose.” Bolton concluded that “America is better for her being here.”<sup>27</sup> After her three-month African adventure, Bolton was a key player in the creation of the State Department’s new Bureau of African Affairs.<sup>28</sup>

### **Back to Washington, then to Belgium**

Tibbetts would not be part of the new African Bureau, though. After completing her assignment in the Congo she returned to Washington and “moved very quickly” to request a transfer back to European Affairs. She believed it would be better for her career, and it would be more fun to focus on European issues, where she could work with a more talented group of U.S. diplomats. She succeeded in getting the transfer, and worked in the European Bureau at the State Department for two years, until 1959, when she was moved to the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) to promote economic development.<sup>29</sup> In 1960, she returned to Africa briefly on an ICA mission, to help lay the groundwork for the Congo’s independence. While crossing the colony on a plane, which also included Patrice Lumumba as a passenger, she witnessed the nationalist leader in action. At each stop Lumumba addressed large crowds, and he impressed Tibbetts as a “charismatic” individual who had thought clearly about his goals.<sup>30</sup> He would not get a chance to carry them out, however, as he was assassinated in early 1961. Shortly thereafter, Joseph Mobutu seized power and he would run the Congo as his own “kleptocracy” for approximately thirty years.<sup>31</sup>

Tibbetts finished her stint at the ICA later in 1961 and was sent to work as a political officer at the American embassy in Belgium. At this time, there was debate over whether French or Flemish should be the official language in Belgium. She asked the wives of several of her colleagues to visit the markets in the important Waterloo district of Brussels and determine which language was being spoken more regularly. They reported to her that people in the markets mostly spoke French, and Tibbetts used this information to craft a helpful report for the State Department. It was this type of efficiency and innovation that earned a “grudging seal of approval” from Douglas MacArthur II, the U.S. ambassador to Belgium. MacArthur was tough, and difficult to please. His recommendation was crucial in order for Tibbetts to be considered for her own ambassadorship. Furthermore, this was one instance in which she believed that being a woman gave her an advantage over male diplomats, who were often not as creative about how they gathered information and “not terribly observant.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Catching LBJ’s Eye**

Returning to Washington in late 1963, she was selected to participate in the State Department’s prestigious Senior Seminar in 1964.<sup>33</sup> Presi-

dent Lyndon Johnson, having recently taken office in the aftermath of John Kennedy's assassination, was determined to appoint women to ambassador positions as soon as possible. Although perhaps partly motivated by political considerations, Johnson truly intended to use his power as president to help marginalized groups in this country. He gets a lot of credit, as he should, for standing up for civil rights for people of color. His vision for America also included women's rights. According to biographer Robert Dallek, Johnson was "an unflinching advocate of social reforms that promised large improvements in the lives of all Americans, particularly minorities and women."<sup>34</sup>

On January 20, 1964, Johnson told Secretary of State Dean Rusk to find some outstanding females quickly "before these women run me out." Johnson believed he needed to pay attention to women's rights issues or else women's groups would turn against him politically and perhaps cost him the 1964 election. This was highly unlikely given that he would face Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), but Johnson was notoriously paranoid and overly sensitive. On January 25, Johnson returned to the issue during a conversation with George Ball, the undersecretary of state. The president asked Ball, "Now are you all going to get some good woman for me over at the State Department in a relatively high position?" Ball responded that they were working on it. Johnson continued, "I want a real outstanding woman. I want a George Ball or a Dean Rusk."<sup>35</sup>

One "outstanding woman" that State officials identified for Johnson was Bethel native Margaret Tibbetts. On March 28, 1964, during a press conference at his ranch in Texas, Johnson announced, "We have named, or planned to name, as Ambassador, Miss Margaret Joy Tibbetts, who is a Foreign Service Officer of the first class." He then noted that she "has a Ph.D. from Bryn Mawr," and that she "was born in Maine."<sup>36</sup> At the time of the announcement, Tibbetts and her classmates in the Senior Seminar were touring the western United States. They visited the San Joaquin Valley in California and drove up the Pacific coast, where she was amazed by the "fabulous redwoods." On March 29 she learned that President Johnson "said I was to be an ambassador." That night she stayed at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, and the next day she toured the Air Force Academy. She spoke with officials at the State Department who told her that the rumor was she would be sent to Finland.<sup>37</sup>

Back in Washington in April, Tibbetts waited to learn of the final decision regarding her posting. In the meantime she and two other women, who had also been promoted to be First Class officers in the Foreign Service, were invited to talk with President Johnson in the Oval



Secretary of State Dean Rusk oversaw the ceremony in which Tibbetts was sworn in as ambassador to Norway. The ceremony took place in August 1964 in the John Quincy Adams room at the State Department. Courtesy of the Bethel Historical Society.

Office. The meeting was arranged by Johnson's appointment advisor, Ken O'Donnell, in response to a memorandum from William Crockett, the State Department's undersecretary for administration. Crockett emphasized the significance of three women – Tibbetts, Carol Laise, and Katherine Bracken – being promoted to the highest rank in the Foreign Service all at once.<sup>38</sup> "In order to highlight the President's interest in full utilization of the talents of women," Crockett suggested that Johnson should "meet with these three women officers at his earliest convenience."<sup>39</sup> According to biographer Dallek, Johnson really believed that the government should "reflect the shift in social and political mood toward fulfilling constitutional mandates on equal treatment under the law." He even seriously considered appointing a woman to the Supreme Court but decided instead to appoint Thurgood Marshall.<sup>40</sup>

On April 28, 1964, the three female Foreign Service officers arrived at the White House in a limousine to visit the president. In her diary Tibbetts noted that it was a wet and humid day, and that for the big



In April 1964, President Lyndon Johnson met with Margaret Tibbetts (far left), Carol Laise, and Katherine Bracken, all of whom had been recently promoted to First Class officers in the Foreign Service. Photo by Cecil Stoughton. Courtesy of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library.

event she wore a two-piece blue and green dress she had purchased in London. She described the meeting with Johnson as “rather fabulous,” but she was not impressed by the loquaciousness of her colleagues, Laise and Bracken. “I was embarrassed by my colleagues’ garrulity,” she confided. Afterwards she went to her office at the State Department to do some work and then spent a quiet evening at home.<sup>41</sup>

Her success attracted attention in the hometown *Bethel Citizen*, which printed a photo and lengthy profile of her on the front page on May 28. The article summarized her education and career accomplishments, culminating with the recent announcement by President Johnson that she would be nominated for an ambassadorship. “Miss Tibbetts’ assignments have taken her to increasingly responsible posts since her

first year,” the local paper proudly proclaimed. The story also noted that she would be speaking at the Gould Academy alumni luncheon during the graduation weekend events in early June.<sup>42</sup>

A few weeks later the Johnson Administration decided that her assignment would be in Oslo, Norway. She was likely assigned to the embassy in Oslo simply because a position opened up there. However, the fact that women had already served there successfully and that Tibbetts was a career Foreign Service officer in the State Department’s European Division also probably factored into the decision. Sending her to Asia or Africa would have made much less sense. Norway was certainly not controversial or challenging in the way that Vietnam or other countries in Europe, such as France, could be, but it was not an unimportant post. Norway was a key NATO ally, one that shared a short border with the Soviet Union. Sending Tibbetts there demonstrated some level of confidence and trust in her. On June 29, Tibbetts heard from a *Washington Post* reporter that the story of her nomination as ambassador to Norway had leaked. The “premature publicity” worried her.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, when her mother Pearl Tibbetts back in Bethel was informed by a journalist from the *Portland Press Herald* the following day, she was thrilled. “Such a fine post,” she wrote in her journal. She relished the praise for her “brilliant daughter” in all of the Maine newspapers and from various callers.<sup>44</sup>

Margaret busied herself in Washington throughout July preparing for her confirmation hearings as ambassador to Norway, and enjoying the pleasures of summer in the nation’s capital. She began taking Norwegian lessons. She played tennis regularly and attended several Washington Senators baseball games. She went to a concert featuring Harry Belafonte and Miriam Makeba, which she described as a “splendid show.” Several members of Congress, including Senator Edmund Muskie (D-ME), Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME), and Representative Frances Bolton (R-OH), hosted her for lunch on Capitol Hill. She struggled to sleep soundly in the humid Washington summer.<sup>45</sup> In western Maine, where it was also getting warmer, but not nearly as humid, her mom was busy picking blueberries. On July 20, she spent the day digging in her yard as a rabbit looked on. That night Pearl’s summer routine was pleasantly interrupted by the delivery of a telegram from President Johnson officially notifying her daughter Margaret that he was sending her nomination as ambassador to Norway to the Senate.<sup>46</sup> According to the telegram Johnson was “pleased” and “delighted” that Tibbetts would “be able to serve the nation in this capacity.”<sup>47</sup>



Margaret Tibbetts and President Johnson met again in the Oval Office in September 1964, before Tibbetts left for Oslo. Photo by O.J. Rapp. Courtesy of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library.

### **Senate Confirmation Hearing and Oval Office Visit**

On July 27, Margaret Tibbetts studied Norwegian and had her hair done. The next day she went to Capitol Hill for her hearing with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator William Fulbright (D-AR), the chair of the committee, led the discussion and was joined by senators George Aiken (R-VT) and Frank Carlson (R-KS). Initially the conversation focused on Tibbetts' experiences in the State Department's Senior Seminar. The conversation soon moved to other topics. Senator Fulbright inquired, "Is there any – is it purely coincidental that people seem to be so prominent from the state of Maine or do you have any explanation for that?" Tibbetts responded that she "had no explanation for that." Fulbright continued, "Is there anything in the climate of Maine that would?" Tibbetts then interjected, "I am a most ar-

dent supporter of the climate of Maine.” Fulbright jokingly wondered whether that was “because it is so vigorous that only the fit survive?” Tibbetts concluded the friendly exchange, “It is a very stimulating climate, Mr. Chairman.”<sup>48</sup>

After Fulbright finished his questioning, it was Senator Aiken’s turn. Being from a state close to Maine, he added a bit of regional humor to the discussion. Aiken joked that “the only thing which Miss Tibbetts lacks is being from Bethel instead of Norway.” Tibbetts responded quickly that “Norway is very near.” Aiken then added that he thought Tibbetts resembled her predecessor as ambassador in Oslo, Frances Willis. Willis, who earned a Ph.D. from Stanford and taught political science at Vassar College for a few years before becoming a diplomat, had been the first female career Foreign Service officer to become an ambassador and also the first to serve in three nations.<sup>49</sup> Tibbetts, who had met Willis in London, had been mentored by the older diplomat and resembled her in terms of education and vocation. She responded to Aiken’s comparison by saying: “Thank you. It is a very high compliment, Senator.”<sup>50</sup> After some more friendly banter the session adjourned. In Tibbetts’ opinion the experience had been “very pleasant,” and it “went well.”<sup>51</sup> The senators agreed and she was approved.

In August 1964, Secretary of State Dean Rusk oversaw the ceremony in which Tibbetts was officially sworn in as ambassador to Norway. Rusk’s facilitation of her advancement was another example of the secretary of state standing up for equal opportunity and battling discrimination. He had been one of the very first government officials to testify in support of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and had intervened to secure a visa so an African-American diplomat could travel to South Africa. Rusk rightly has been praised for advancing racial equality, and his support of Tibbetts’ promotion suggests that he also deserves some credit as an advocate for women’s rights, as does his boss, President Johnson.<sup>52</sup> The ceremony took place in the impressive John Quincy Adams Room at the State Department, and was a prestigious event. Tibbetts later recalled that the high-level attention at her swearing-in was quite an honor and “pleased” her, because she appreciated getting respect from her Foreign Service peers such as Rusk.<sup>53</sup>

In early September, Johnson’s advisors decided to invite Tibbetts back for a second visit to the Oval Office. Gordon Chase informed Jack Valenti that in terms of national security there was “no pressing reason” for a return visit, and if there was no available time slot then he was certain she would “take rejection like a trouper.”<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, if





Margaret Tibbetts and Secretary of State Dean Rusk greet one another. Courtesy of the Bethel Historical Society.

Valenti could find a few minutes in Johnson's schedule for Tibbetts, there would be an "upshot," and it would be "largely for the purpose of making some points with the domestic ladies."<sup>55</sup> Valenti did find the time. After "puttering around" all morning on September 12, Tibbetts "dashed to the White House," waited for quite some time with George Ball and several other diplomats, and then "briefly" saw the president for the second time that year.<sup>56</sup> Although she did not record her feelings in her diary, it must have been another exciting encounter for the Bethel native.

### **Ambassadorship in Norway**

A few days later on September 16, Tibbetts set sail on a cruise ship for Norway. Exhausted from the whirlwind of activity leading up to her departure, she went to bed early in her quarters, which she considered "very comfortable." On September 24, the boat arrived in Copenhagen. Tibbetts had a lunch meeting with Ambassador Katherine White, who

had been nominated for the post in Denmark in early March and on the job for about three weeks. During the next four years these two female ambassadors would have considerable contact. Tibbetts characterized White as a “smart woman” and an “excellent ambassador.”<sup>57</sup> After this first lunch with White, Tibbetts returned to the ship. It soon headed for Oslo, and arrived the next day. Ambassador Tibbetts spoke to journalists at a press conference, looked over her office, and then did a radio interview. She was pleased by her residence, which she described as a “large luxurious house” that had “all the fixings.” After eating dinner and reading, she slept soundly. The next morning, September 26, she went to her office and did a little work. In the afternoon she walked around downtown Oslo and then bought some local newspapers.<sup>58</sup>

On October 6, the new American ambassador presented her credentials to Norway’s King Olav V. She “chatted” with him for about ten minutes, and thought that he was “fascinating.”<sup>59</sup> Her initial impression of King Olav was quite positive because he was so “relaxed,” and immediately she became “very fond” of him. He told her that they were expected to give speeches, but he would rather talk with her informally. He accepted the official letter of appointment from President Johnson and proceeded to put it on his desk, which was piled high with books and papers. She later wondered “if they ever found it” amidst the clutter.<sup>60</sup> She celebrated afterwards by drinking a glass of champagne with Norwegian officials; that evening she attended a reception.

Tibbetts’ decision to learn Norwegian had been a point of discussion during her Senate confirmation hearings. When one of the senators asked why she was doing so, she had replied with a chuckle that it was “because the people in Norway [speak] Norwegian.”<sup>61</sup> As simple as that sounds, it is not always the case that American ambassadors learn local languages. If she had only intended to speak with high-level diplomats or business people, she could certainly have gotten by with English or French. However, her philosophy of being a good ambassador was that you “don’t just associate with the upper echelon,” but you should work hard to “know a wide cross-section of the population.” In order to do so, she believed it was important to learn Norwegian. “When you are visiting a little town and the people are taking you through a new school or showing you a slate quarry,” she explained, “you want to be able to talk with them.”<sup>62</sup> Although Tibbetts had learned French and studied German before taking on Norwegian, she humbly commented that she was “not a good linguist.” She believed that her Norwegian was only “good enough to get by.” When scholar Ann Morin commented that she had

heard the ambassador spoke Norwegian very well, Tibbetts replied, with a laugh, that it “depends on whom you’re talking to.”<sup>63</sup> In any case, she had made the effort, which must have made a positive impression with locals in Norway.<sup>64</sup>

Less than three months after her arrival in Oslo, Tibbetts helped to welcome an important guest from the United States. On December 8, 1964, Ambassador Tibbetts greeted the party of Martin Luther King, Jr., as he arrived in Oslo for the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. On the way from the United States he had stopped in London, and, at St. Paul’s Cathedral, he gave a speech in which he called for sanctions against apartheid South Africa and emphasized the connections between the fight for freedom in the southern United States and southern Africa. When he arrived in Oslo, there was a big crowd and a lot of commotion, and Tibbetts did not sleep well that night, “thinking of M.L. King.” She went to her office the next day and read some of the files about King. That evening she hosted a reception for him and his entourage, and noticed that he seemed “tired.” His wife Coretta, on the other hand, enjoyed the festivities. On December 10, she witnessed King’s Nobel acceptance speech. According to Tibbetts, he “spoke well” and was “well-received.”<sup>65</sup> As he had in London, he again commented on the connections among the various struggles for equality around the globe, stating that “the freedom movement is spreading the widest liberation in human history.” Afterwards, he and his colleagues sang “We Shall Overcome” with some Norwegian students in the hotel lobby.<sup>66</sup> On December 12, the King entourage departed, and a few days later Tibbetts submitted her formal summary of the event to the State Department.<sup>67</sup>

The next two years, 1965 and 1966, were busy and satisfying professionally for Tibbetts, as she ran the embassy in Oslo with no major problems. Relations between the U.S. government and the Norwegian government were quite strong, with Norway being a member in good standing of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO had been created in the late 1940s as a military alliance to protect Western Europe from Soviet expansion. Norway was a crucial piece of the puzzle in NATO’s operations, especially since the two countries shared a short border. She got along well with Norway’s foreign ministers and defense ministers. She did not see that as much of an accomplishment, though, and later joked that “an American ambassador who doesn’t have a good relationship with Norwegians is out of his mind.” Working in a NATO country that generally respected the United States did not have the challenges that posts in other parts of the world would have presented. There

were sometimes demonstrations outside the embassy protesting the Vietnam War, and occasionally someone would throw a rock through a window or criticize U.S. policy in Southeast Asia at a party. "The only thing to do," Tibbetts remarked, "was to grit your teeth and ride it out and keep cool."<sup>68</sup>

During her tenure in Norway, Tibbetts was involved in negotiations over military bases. Although the specifics of such negotiations are unknown, there is no doubt that bases in Norway were a high priority for her as ambassador. While there are officially no foreign bases in Norway during peacetime, during the 1960s there were approximately one hundred manned military facilities in Norway that were funded primarily by the United States or NATO. Norway's responsibility in NATO was to guard the northern flank of Europe and monitor the sea lanes leading from the USSR to the north Atlantic.<sup>69</sup>

Living in Norway, which reminded her of coastal Maine, was quite pleasant for Tibbetts. She especially enjoyed the wonderful skiing that was so close to Oslo. "I have to get out and restore my tissues," she explained.<sup>70</sup> She did a lot of reading and knitting in the evenings, and went hiking and bird-watching on the weekends. As a natural loner, the solitary and peaceful pattern suited her perfectly. Her house servants were an Italian couple, and they worried about her getting lonely, but she assured them that it was not a problem. They had previously worked for Frances Willis when she had been the U.S. ambassador to Norway, and came highly recommended. They did a superb job of cooking and cleaning, and Tibbetts appreciated them very much. After she had retired and was living in rural Maine again, she admitted that one thing she definitely had liked about being ambassador was having such good servants. Tibbetts wished she could find someone to help with her housework at her place on Paradise Hill. "That's one (unfortunate) thing about Bethel," she stated regarding the lack of servants available.<sup>71</sup>

In 1967, a new diplomat name Rozanne Ridgway joined the U.S. embassy team in Oslo as a political analyst. A graduate of Hamline University in Minnesota, Ridgway entered the Foreign Service directly out of college at the young age of twenty-one. As soon as she arrived in Norway, she greatly impressed Tibbetts, who quickly concluded that Ridgway really did not need training even though it was her first political position. "Just give her a subject," observed the ambassador, "and she'd watch me... and then she'd do it."<sup>72</sup> Tibbetts respected Ridgway for her intelligence and abilities, and the feeling was definitely mutual. After her stint in Norway, Ridgway had a long and extremely impressive diplo-

matic career that included ambassadorships in Finland and the German Democratic Republic, and culminated in her influential tenure as assistant secretary of state for European affairs.<sup>73</sup> She attributed her successful career in great part to the guidance she had received in Norway under Tibbetts, whom she described as “brilliant” and having a “super-intellect.” Her experience with the ambassador from Maine was not all business, though. Tibbetts “had a delightful sense of humor,” Ridgway recalled. “Essentially, it was irrepressible, and it would pop out, some funny remark at a staff meeting,” she added.<sup>74</sup>

The greatest debt Ridgway owed Tibbetts related to how her superior had served as a mentor and fostered her development, at “great personal cost for herself.” She allowed junior officers such as Ridgway to draft reports that she could have written herself “in an instant.” In Ridgway’s assessment, Tibbetts “didn’t need any of us,” and “she could have done every bit of political analysis at this post, hands tied behind her back, and I’m sure all of the economic analysis.” However, in the interest of grooming future leaders for the State Department, most notably Ridgway, Tibbetts “let people grow, make their own mistakes, and have their own accomplishments.” The price she paid was a lot of boring hours sitting in her office with very little work to do. “She would go walking in these wonderful yellow rubber boots that had white daisies on the side,” Ridgway remembered, “because she had nothing to do with her time.” Working in Oslo “was not a challenging post for someone with that set of skills,” she concluded. Ridgway tried to pattern her later training of underlings, when she worked as an ambassador and assistant secretary, on the exceptional mentoring model that Tibbetts had provided.<sup>75</sup> Thus, most of her time was spent in her office reading over and editing reports written by her subordinates. She occasionally hosted receptions, which was not her favorite duty. She preferred to travel around the country to visit bases and important towns and cities in Norway.

In the spring of 1968, Norway’s King Olav journeyed to Washington and met with President Lyndon Johnson. Tibbetts contributed significantly to the planning of the affair, and had thoroughly informed her State Department superiors about King Olav’s preferences and also about Norwegian customs and traditions. Her work helped guarantee that the visit transpired without any major hitches, and she was a guest of honor at the White House state dinner for King Olav on April 25. A few weeks later, Johnson sent her a photo album of the event as a memento, and thanked her for her “part in making King Olav’s visit with us a success.”<sup>76</sup> Her final major task as ambassador, like her four-year tenure in Oslo, had gone smoothly.

After completing her stint in Norway in 1968, Tibbetts returned to the State Department in Washington. She was soon appointed deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs, and was serving in that position in 1970 when she received the Federal Women's Award in recognition of her exemplary work.<sup>77</sup> Her career prospects in the U.S. government seemed very bright, but in 1971, at the age of fifty-two, she decided to leave the Foreign Service and return to Bethel to care for her elderly mother. Tibbetts quickly became involved in local education as a trustee of Gould Academy and a supporter of the town library. She also lectured part-time in history and political science at Bowdoin College.

### **Building the Bethel Historical Society**

After retiring to western Maine, Tibbetts helped to build the Bethel Historical Society (BHS) into a very impressive institution. The BHS was founded in 1966 due to the initiative of local historian Eva Bean. Tibbetts played a crucial role in the expansion of the institution in the 1970s, helping to establish a museum and archives and in the hiring of a full-time director, Dr. Stanley Howe. Under Howe's skillful administration over the next three decades, the BHS grew to a membership of 1,400.<sup>78</sup> Tibbetts mentored Howe, just as she had trained junior officers at her embassy in Oslo. She assisted considerably in the acquisition of outside funding from sources such as the Bingham Foundation, which generously supported the BHS by helping it to take ownership of the Moses Mason House. The stately structure quickly became a place where, in the words of Stan Howe, the BHS could "display and store artifacts, hold events, do research and begin the work of bringing historical publications and programming to Bethel and the area."<sup>79</sup>

Tibbetts' success in securing assistance from the Bingham Foundation surely was not hurt by her earlier contact with Congresswoman Bolton, the sister of foundation benefactor William Bingham. Tibbetts served on the board of directors of the BHS, and held various officer positions over the years.<sup>80</sup> She frequently gave lectures on local history, and published several of these in the society's newsletter.<sup>81</sup> Upon her death in 2010, at the age of ninety, she donated her papers and memorabilia to the Bethel History Society's museum and archives. About a year after she died, the BHS hosted a slideshow and lecture in honor of her career.<sup>82</sup>

Fittingly for someone trained to be a professional historian, Tibbetts' significance includes making a major contribution to the study and preservation of local history in Maine. She did considerable work, much of it behind the scenes, to help build the Bethel Historical Society into a

thriving institution. She mentored Stan Howe, the society's first full-time director, and treated him "like a son."<sup>83</sup> She assisted considerably in the acquisition of crucial outside funding. She held a variety of officer and board positions for the society over the years, and delivered lectures and contributed essays on local history for the edification of the membership. The impressive Bethel Historical Society and the archives and museum in its Regional History Center exist in part thanks to her work.

### **Legacies of Tibbetts' Career**

First and foremost, Margaret Tibbetts would want to be remembered as an excellent Foreign Service officer who worked hard and accomplished a lot during her career. She helped shape U.S. policy towards the Rhodesian Federation and the Congo in the 1950s, served with distinction in Belgium in the early 1960s, and ran a successful embassy in Oslo from 1964 to 1968. Highlights of her ambassadorship included hosting Martin King when he received the Nobel Peace Prize and helping to organize King Olav's visit to the White House. Having earned the respect of her State Department colleagues, she ended her career as a deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs.

Perhaps her greatest contribution to U.S. foreign relations, though, was in demonstrating that a woman could be a successful and highly competent ambassador. As one of the first female ambassadors, Tibbetts opened doors for future women such as Rozanne Ridgway, whom she also mentored, and made it possible for them to become key players at the very highest levels of American diplomacy. Whereas she had been only the eighth female U.S. ambassador when she went to Oslo in 1964, just forty years later in 2004 there were thirty American women serving as ambassadors out of the total number of 167 U.S. chiefs of mission around the world.<sup>84</sup> In 2010, the year Tibbetts died, more than half of the new officers joining the Foreign Service were women and thirty percent of all U.S. ambassadors were female.<sup>85</sup>

Tibbetts had helped to make all of this possible, but she had never considered herself a crusader for women's rights. For her there was no doubt that in the decades following her service many more women would become influential American diplomats. She believed the best approach was not to focus on someone's gender, however, but instead to make sure that they were competent, hard-working, and well-organized. The question she asked about junior officers such as Ridgway was not whether they were women, but instead, "Are they good ambassadors?"<sup>86</sup>



At the age of fifty-two, Tibbetts decided to leave government service and return to Bethel. She quickly became a trustee of Gould Academy, the school she attended in her youth. Maine Historical Society Collections.

Thanks partly to the mentoring of Tibbetts, Ridgway became an excellent ambassador, and her success in the 1980s in turn helped pave the way for qualified women such as Madeleine Albright and Hillary Clinton to oversee U.S. foreign relations. Ambassador Margaret Joy Tibbetts typified the university-trained career woman who advanced through the ranks of the State Department primarily on merit. Her successful work in Africa and Europe during the height of the Cold War helped ensure that similar women would be given increasingly bigger responsibilities regarding U.S. foreign relations.

Tibbetts' accomplishments in public service also signified another example of a Maine native contributing to American diplomacy or politics at the highest levels. As one of the nation's first female ambassadors, she deserves to be acknowledged among the ranks of prominent sons and daughters of Maine who played roles on the national and interna-



tional stage during the Cold War, such as Margaret Chase Smith, Edmund Muskie, William Cohen, and George Mitchell. During her confirmation hearings, Senator Fulbright wondered why so many Mainers served with distinction at the national level. While solving that puzzle is beyond the scope of this essay, and Tibbetts herself did not have an answer, her career is yet one more example of a Maine native succeeding in Washington.

## NOTES

1. Katherine Sibley, "Introduction: Gender and Sexuality in American Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (September 2012): 695-698.

2. Laura McEnaney, "Personal, Political, and International: A Reflection on Diplomacy and Methodology," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (September 2012): 769-772. For an excellent biographical piece in that issue see Frank Costigliola, "Pamela Churchill, Wartime London, and the Making of the Special Relationship," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (September 2012): 753-762. In 1939, Pamela Digby married Winston Churchill's son Randolph. While Randolph was serving in the military in 1940-41, Pamela had several affairs with influential American diplomats including W. Averell Harriman, whom she would later marry. As Pamela Harriman she capped off her long career in diplomacy as the U.S. ambassador to France in the 1990s.

3. A lengthy interview with Tibbetts and a brief biographical sketch constitute a chapter entitled "Trailblazer" in Ann Morin, *Her Excellency: An Oral History of American Women Ambassadors* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), pp. 45-60. Her role in U.S. relations with Africa is analyzed in Andy DeRoche, "Frances Bolton, Margaret Tibbetts, and the U.S. Relations with the Rhodesian Federation, 1950-1960," in Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar, and Giacomo Macola, eds., *Living the End of Empire: Politics and Society in Late Colonial Zambia* (Leiden, Holland: Brill, 2011), pp. 299-325. She is mentioned, although with her name spelled incorrectly, in the essay about female diplomats by noted historian Joan Hoff-Wilson in Edward Crapol, ed., *Women and American Foreign Policy: Lobbyists, Critics, and Insiders* (Wilmington DE: Scholarly Resources, 1992), p. 179. Two studies of Bethel include short discussions of her diplomatic career—Stanley Howe, *Bethel, Maine: A Brief History* (Charleston: The History Press, 2009), p. 126; Randall Bennett, *Bethel, Maine: An Illustrated History* (Bethel: Bethel Historical Society, 1991), pp. 180, 205.

4. For her recollections about her father and a photo of him see Margaret Joy Tibbetts, "Bethel Doctors, 1900-1950," *The Bethel Courier: Quarterly Publication of the Bethel Historical Society's Regional History Center* (Winter 2004): 1-3. Dr. Raymond Tibbetts died in 1958.

5. Margaret Tibbetts interview by Helene Sargent, September 15, 1982, 1-3, Women in Federal Government Oral History Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA.

6. Tibbetts interview by Sargent, pp. 3-5, 11.

7. Tibbetts quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, p. 46. Pearl Ashby Tibbetts died in 1982. There is also a photo of her and details of her life in Tibbetts, "Bethel Doctors."
8. *Gould Academy Herald* (1937), p. 13.
9. Tibbetts interview by Sargent, pp. 15-18.
10. Tibbetts interview by Sargent, pp. 25-26.
11. Tibbetts quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, p. 59.
12. Author's interview with Margaret Joy Tibbetts, December 22, 1993, Bethel, Maine. At the time of our interview, Tibbetts lived on Paradise Hill, just a few houses up from my aunt and uncle. My grandparents had lived on a farm nearby, and my parents would later build a house across the street.
13. Author's interview with Tibbetts.
14. Tibbetts to the State Department, May 1, 1952, State Department Decimal File, 745.00/5-152, National Archives II (hereafter NA2), College Park, MD. This was the first of seven lengthy reports regarding the proposed federation sent by Tibbetts. For an insightful analysis of Nkumbula's career see Giacomo Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
15. Tibbetts to the State Department, November 25, 1952, State Department Decimal File, 745.00/11-2552, NA2.
16. For the recollections of a Kenyan who lived through the terrible Mau Mau period see Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), pp. 61-72. For an insightful revisionist discussion of the conflict see Myles Osborne, "The Kamba and the Mau Mau: Ethnicity, Development, and Chiefship, 1952-1960," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 43, no. 1 (January 2010): 63-87.
17. Tibbetts to the State Department, March 27, 1953, State Department Decimal File, 745.00/3-2753, NA2.
18. Author's interview with Tibbetts. For a useful assessment of the years immediately preceding federation see Andrew Roberts, "Northern Rhodesia: The Post-War Back-ground, 1945-1953," in Gewald, Hinfelaar, and Macola, eds., *Living the End of Empire*, pp. 15-24.
19. Tibbetts to the State Department, July 30, 1953, State Department Decimal File, 745.00/7-3053, NA2.
20. For a thorough study of U.S. relations with the federation see Andrew DeRoche, *Black, White, & Chrome: The United States and Zimbabwe, 1953-1980* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2001), pp. 13-48.
21. On the significance of the Congo see Lise Namikas, *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo, 1960-1965* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 22-27.
22. Roberts, "Northern Rhodesia," pp. 15-17.
23. Author's interview with Tibbetts.
24. Tibbetts quoted in Jonathan Helmreich, *United States Relations with Belgium and the Congo, 1940-1960* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), p. 168.

25. For an excellent overview of the catastrophe that unfolded in the Congo between 1960 and 1990 see Michela Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).
26. These examples discussed by Tibbetts in Morin, *Her Excellency*, pp. 47-48, 52-54.
27. Frances Bolton to Raymond Tibbetts, October 11, 1955, container 146, folder 2571, Frances Payne Bolton Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, OH.
28. For an overview of Bolton's trip and its impact see Andrew DeRoche, "Frances Bolton and Africa, 1955-58," *Passport: The Newsletter of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations* (January 2010): 34-37.
29. The ICA had been established in 1955 to oversee all foreign assistance programs for development around the world. It was abolished in 1961, and its functions were transferred to the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), which is still around as of 2013.
30. Author's interview with Tibbetts.
31. For a description of Lumumba's eloquent oratorical skills, and a damning indictment of Mobutu's "kleptocracy," see Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, pp. 63-79 and 99-108.
32. Tibbetts quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, pp. 48, 53.
33. The Senior Seminar was professional-development training for Foreign Service officers, almost like a post-graduate course in foreign policy. It included assigned readings, lectures, and tours of military and other facilities around the country.
34. Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 188.
35. Tape Recordings of Lyndon Johnson Phone Calls from January 1964, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XXXIII* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2004), pp. 3-4.
36. Johnson's March 28, 1964 news conference, in *Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon Johnson, 1963-1964* (Washington, Government Printing Office: 1965), 1: 425-426.
37. Diary of Margaret Joy Tibbetts (hereafter MJT Diary), March 27-30, 1964, entries, Bethel Historical Society (hereafter BHS), Bethel, ME.
38. Laise served as U.S. ambassador to Nepal from 1966 to 1973. Bracken did not become an ambassador, but she did eventually become the deputy director of the office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs in the State Department, and later was head of the department's Aegean Division.
39. Memorandum from William Crockett to Ken O'Donnell, March 4, 1964, Margaret Tibbetts Name File, Box 123, White House Central File, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library (hereafter LBJ), Austin, TX.
40. Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, p. 438.
41. MJT Diary, April 28, 1964, BHS.
42. *Bethel Citizen*, May 28, 1964, p. 1.
43. MJT Diary, June 29, 1964, BHS.

44. Diary of Pearl Ashby Tibbetts (hereafter PAT Diary), June 30, 1964 entry, BHS. The *Bethel Citizen* featured a brief announcement detailing Tibbetts' nomination for the Norway position on the top of the front page of its July 2, 1964, issue.
45. MJT Diary, July 5-8, 1964, and July 21-24, 1964, BHS.
46. PAT Diary, July 17-20, 1964, BHS.
47. Telegram from Johnson to Margaret Tibbetts, July 20, 1964, Box 123, White House Central File, Margaret Tibbetts Name File, LBJ.
48. The United States Senate, Report of Proceedings, *Hearing held before the Committee on Foreign Relations, Nominations*, July 28, 1964 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1964).
49. For details of her career see Val Paraiso, "Where There's a Willis There's a Way," *Foreign Service Journal* (February 1969): 26. She also served in Switzerland, 1953-57, and in Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon), 1961-64.
50. The United States Senate, Report of Proceedings, July 28, 1964.
51. MJT Diary, July 28, 1964, BHS.
52. Rusk's support for racial equality is discussed in Thomas Zeiler, *Dean Rusk: Defending the American Mission Abroad* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000), pp. 90-92.
53. Ann Miller Morin's interview with Margaret Tibbetts, May 28, 1985, Bethel, Maine, 3, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, National Foreign Affairs Training Center, Arlington, VA. Thanks to Randy Bennett from the Bethel Historical Society for sending me portions of this interview.
54. Chase was the assistant to the national security advisor (McGeorge Bundy). Valenti was special assistant for congressional relations.
55. Chase to Valenti, September 11, 1964, folder "Norway Memos Volume I, 7/64-1/69," box 200, National Security File, LBJ.
56. MJT Diary, September 12, 1964, BHS.
57. Morin interview with Tibbetts, p. 4.
58. MJT Diary, September 15-26, 1964, BHS.
59. MJT Diary, October 6, 1964, BHS.
60. Tibbetts quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, p. 48.
61. Tibbetts quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, p. 48.
62. Tibbetts quoted in Joan Kent, "Sex No Barrier in Diplomacy," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, March 13, 1970.
63. Morin interview with Tibbetts, p. 5.
64. American Peace Corps volunteers also did their best to master local languages, beginning with their very first assignments in the early 1960s. See Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 156-160, 176-180.
65. MJT Diary, December 8-10, 1964, BHS.

66. King quoted in Andrew J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Civil Rights Ambassador* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003), p. 25. In her interview with the author in 1993, Tibbetts remarked that among King's companions, Young was the only one who seemed to be organized.
67. MJT Diary, December 12-15, 1964, BHS.
68. Tibbetts quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, pp. 50, 56.
69. Simon Duke, *United States Military Forces and Installations in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 215-235. While Duke's study does not mention Tibbetts specifically, it clearly indicates how important military bases were to all U.S. ambassadors in Norway.
70. Tibbetts quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, p. 57.
71. Morin interview with Tibbetts, p. 54.
72. Tibbetts quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, p. 51; Ridgway's background can be found on pp. 189-190.
73. While serving as assistant secretary of state for European affairs in the 1980s Ridgway played a key role in President Ronald Reagan's summits with Mikhail Gorbachev, even participating in the historic nuclear weapons reduction negotiations.
74. Ridgway quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, p. 191.
75. Ridgway quoted in Morin, *Her Excellency*, p. 191.
76. President Johnson to Tibbetts, May 17, 1968, Box 123, Margaret Tibbetts Name File, White House Central File, LBJ.
77. This was a program initiated in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy to recognize outstanding work by female government employees.
78. Howe, *Bethel, Maine: A Brief History*, pp. 131-135.
79. Howe, *Bethel, Maine: A Brief History*, p. 135.
80. Author's interview with Stanley Howe, June 22, 2012, Bethel, Maine.
81. For example see Margaret Joy Tibbetts, "Paradise Road: A Brief History (Part II)," *The Bethel Courier: Quarterly Publication of the Bethel Historical Society's Regional History Center* (Fall 1992): 1-2. In this essay she ranked seeing sap boiling into maple syrup at Jay Willard's farm as one of her favorite annual sights. As a young boy the author occasionally helped Jay, his grandfather, with the process.
82. Andy DeRoche, "From Bethel to Norway via the Congo: Margaret Tibbetts and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1949-1964," presentation at BHS, June 16, 2011. This essay is based to a great extent on that lecture. Thanks to Stan Howe and Randy Bennett for inviting me to deliver the talk. Thanks also to my daughter Ellen, then six years old, for helping me advance the Powerpoint slides.
83. Author's interview with Howe.
84. Interview with Julia Chang Bloch, former U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, in *The Ambassadors Review* (Fall 2004), [www.americanambassadors.org](http://www.americanambassadors.org), accessed on April 18, 2011.

85. Jodi Jacobson, "Dramatic Rise in Women Ambassadors, and How the *Washington Post* Treats the Story," *RH Reality Check Blog*, January 11, 2010, [www.rhrealitycheck.org](http://www.rhrealitycheck.org), accessed on April 18, 2011.

86. Morin interview with Tibbetts, p. 18.